

# [***Trump Ally Defeats DeSantis-Backed Candidate In Kentucky Gubernatorial Primary***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6880-SHV1-JBCM-F111-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron defeated former Trump-era U.N. Ambassador Kelly Craft in a crowded GOP gubernatorial primary Tuesday.

**Body**

**Topline**

Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron a Donald Trump-backed candidate won the Republican primary for governor Tuesday, defeating a competitor quietly endorsed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R), in an early test of Trump and DeSantis endorsement powers.

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Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron, left, and Kentucky gubernatorial candidate Kelly Craft at a Kentucky Gubernatorial GOP Primary Debate in Lexington, Ky., Monday, May 1, 2023. (AP Photo/Timothy D. Easley)

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**Key Facts**

The Associated Presscalled the racefor Cameron shortly after 7 p.m., as Cameron held adouble-digit leadover State Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles, Trump-era U.N. Ambassador Kelly Craft and nine other candidates.

Craft earned DeSantis backing in a statement toFox Newson Monday, with the Florida governor comparing her policy stances with his own governing style.

Craft shares the same vision we do in Florida, DeSantis said, adding she will stand up to the left as they try to indoctrinate our children with their woke ideology, while blasting incumbent Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear as a woke, liberal governor who s put a radical agenda ahead of Kentuckians.

Trump threw his support behind Cameron in June and appeared at a tele-rally with him on Sunday, saying, I have no doubt he s going to be a fantastic governor.

Republicans view the Kentucky gubernatorial race as a bellwether for their election prospects in 2024, when the Democrats risk losing their Senate majority in several swing states where vulnerable senators are up for re-election.

The election also served as one of the first chances for Trump to redeem himself after losses of his preferred candidates in the 2022 midterm election led many in the GOP to blame him for costing Republicans the Senate majority and contributing to a slimmer-than-expected majority in the House.

**What To Watch For**

Cameron will face Beshear in the November election. Beshear ousted former Republican Gov. Matt Bevin in 2019, marking a significant win for Democrats in a conservative state where both chambers of the state legislature are controlled by the GOP.

**Key Background**

Tuesday s election capped off a heated primary race that pitted the wife of billionaire coal magnate and GOP megadonorJoe Craftagainst Cameron, who is the state s first Republican attorney general in more than 70 years and would also become the first Black GOP governor in the country. Craft and Cameron waged a contentious advertising war, and overall, the 12 candidates and their backers poured more than $12 million into the race,according to AdImpact ***Politics***. On the campaign trail, Cameron sought to highlight his Trump endorsement, despite Craft having worked for Trump, while pro-Craft ads have cast Cameron as an establishment Republican insider with ties to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, who he previously worked under. Kentucky s two Republican senators, McConnell and Rand Paul, did not endorse a candidate in the race, while Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.) has endorsed Craft.

**Surprising Fact**

Craft said during a debate in April she would support Trump over DeSantis in the 2024 GOP presidential primary, touting his record as president. He kept hundreds of thousands of jobs in America and not being sourced out to China and Mexico. He kept our country safe and energy independent, she said, according to the**Courier-Journal**.

**Further Reading**

Trump-Backed Candidates Have Mixed Showing In Midterms And Trump Is Reportedly Furious(Forbes)

A Hostile, Under-the-Radar Primary Splinters Republicans(The New York Times)

Kentucky GOP governor primary tests Trump s influence ahead of 2024(CNN)

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